8060, Wabash City Schools

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The vision of Project Continuity is increased county-wide collaborative capacity, technology supported instructional design and student-focused technology classroom engagement. Wabash County is a predominately rural county in northeastern Indiana with three school districts. Wabash City Schools is a small town school district with 1464 students in grades K - 12. MSD of Wabash County is largest of the three corporations, encompassing the majority of the county. The district has 2410 students and 230 instructional staff located in six buildings. Manchester Community Schools are located in the city of North Manchester. MSC has 1533 students located in four buildings with 95 instructional staff. Project Continuity has identified four (4) measurable and attainable educational goals and eleven (11) related objectives that directly support the instructional and curriculum needs described in the project. These goals and objectives describe student outcomes that are clearly linked to student learning, Indiana Academic Standards, School Improvement Plan, and the schools¿ technology plans. Project Continuity¿s professional development will proceed in four (4) phases and be organized by the project¿s methods and activities. In addition to expenditures from the Capital Projects Fund and General Fund, Wabash City Schools have been complemented by funding from several external grants. The evaluation of Project Continuity will be organized consistent with the methods and activities of the project. The awarding of this grant will allow for a fully operational, county-wide partnership to expand to the sharing of successful instructional methods for the full integration of classroom-based, student-focused technologies. The high-risk, highly mobile student population of the area will be able to experience increased curricular and technology supported instructional continuity.

NEEDS/BASELINE

Location/Description: Wabash County is a predominately rural county in northeastern Indiana. The three partner school corporations are the only public school districts in the county.

Wabash City Schools is a small town school district located in central northern Indiana with 1464 students in grades K-12. The district has 112 instructional staff. Four schools serve a student population that contains 62% free/reduced lunch students. The special education population is 19.7% (2.2% above the 17.5% state average).

MSD of Wabash County is largest of the three corporations, encompassing the majority of the county. The district has 2410 students and 230 instructional staff located in six buildings. MSD of Wabash County has a 34% of free/reduced lunch students. The special education population is 15% of the student population.

Manchester Community Schools is the third district in the county. The district is located in the northern part of Wabash County in the city of North Manchester. The district has 1533 students located in four buildings with 95 instructional staff. Manchester Community Schools has a free/reduced lunch population of 54.36%. 15.3% receive special education services.

Partnership Student Achievement Profile: In the three partner districts, the achievement gap is increasing between the general education students who pass ISTEP and the Free/Reduced students who pass. The overall average difference in passing rates between the two groups is 10.6% or an average of 573 students who need additional support to be meet the state¿s minimum standard. Wabash City Schools has maintained an overall achievement in AYP for the third year in a row, but two schools are not making AYP. O.J.Neighbours is a K-3 building with 466 students and is a Title I school. Seventy-one percent are on free/reduced lunch. O.J.Neighbours has not made AYP for the second consecutive year. Mathematics and English performance in the free and reduced lunch category was below the state average. The categories of Overall and White categories was below the state standard in Mathematics. W.C.Mills is a 4-5 building with 205 students. Seventy percent of students are on free or reduced lunch. W.C.Mills has made AYP and is a Title I school. Wabash Middle School is a 6-8 building and has 342 students. Sixty percent are on free or reduced lunch. Wabash Middle School has never made AYP. Last year they missed in two categories of English (Free/Reduced) and both English and Mathematics for special education. They receive no Title I monies. Wabash High School contains grades 9-12 and has 451 students. Of those students, 50% are on free/reduced lunch. In 2008-2009, Wabash High School made AYP for the first time.

MSD of Wabash County has attained AYP at the district level, but there are concerns with the Special Education and Free/Reduced populations not achieving at the same level as the general population. Southwood Elementary, Northfield Jr/Sr High, and Southwood Jr/Sr High have not consistently made AYP in the last few years due to lower performance by the Special Education and Free/Reduced subsets. None of these schools receive Title 1 funding.

Manchester Community Schools has also attained AYP at the district level, but at Manchester Jr/Sr High, both in English and Math, Free/Reduced populations did not make AYP.

Partnership Technology Systems/Needs Profile: The vision of Project Continuity is continuous, K-12 student and teacher access to common classroom technologies. Systemic upgrading of classroom technologies across the partnership will help address the harsh reality of a highly mobile student population. Student performance deficiencies in Math and Science are systemic and countywide. The

increased systemic integration of emerging classroom-based, student-focused technologies promises increased student engagement and achievement in this program and others like it.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

Project Continuity has identified four (4) measurable and attainable educational goals and eleven (11) related objectives that directly support the needs described in the project. These goals and objectives describe student outcomes that are clearly linked to student learning, Indiana Academic Standards, School Improvement Plan, and the schools¿ technology plans. The four goals target student achievement, systemic instructional design, district-wide technology integration, embedded on-site professional development, and a commitment to state-wide leadership. The eleven objectives are measurable and attainable within the framework of the project.

Goal #1 Increase K-8 student language arts and mathematics achievement to meet or exceed AYP requirements.

Objective 1.1 Increase student-centered and learner-focused instructional design and classroom instruction.

Objective 1.2 Increase student access to web-based digital curricular content and selected online educational resources.

Objective 1.3 Increase stakeholder/partner technology supported communication, collaboration and shared best practice.

Goal #2 Develop systemic instructional design guidelines and strategies that increase the integration of selected technologies into classroom, building, district, and community learning culture characterized by more engaged learning environments.

Objective 2.1 Implement systemic instructional design guidelines and strategies.

Objective 2.2 Identify proven and promising classroom technologies to increase student access to emerging classroom technologies that support more engaged learning environments.

Objective 2.3 Increase K-8 student access to selected classroom technologies to support the systemic learning culture.

Objective 2.4 Increase parental and community engagement in instructional goals, classroom strategies, and student assessment systems.

Goal #3 Provide embedded faculty professional development to implement a district-wide culture for learning characterized by technology-rich classrooms, systemic instructional design, and student focused classroom instruction.

Objective 3.1 Provide faculty with innovative strategies for technology integration and instructional design.

Objective 3.2 Provide faculty with continuous, on-site professional development to support a systemic district learning culture.

Goal #4 Contribute to a countywide and state-wide culture of academic excellence, school governance and educational leadership

Objective 4.1 Become a model site for technology supported instructional design and classroom instruction

Objective 4.2 Participate in state, regional and national professional meetings/internet outlets targeting technology integration, improved student performance and increased parental engagement.

METHODS/ACTIVITIES

The Methods and Activities of Project Continuity are organized within the project¿s goals and objectives. Each method or activity has been developed to increase the likelihood of successful implementation and systemic impact. Curricula and teaching strategies have been indentified and described that will be used to integrate technology effectively into classroom instruction.

Goal #1 Objective 1.1

Method and Activity 1.1.1 Introduction of Alternative Instructional Models (2/1/10-6/1/10) Faculty will be introduced to alternative technology models of lesson and strategy design to increase student achievement.

Method and Activity 1.1.2 Development of Student Centered and Learner Focused Activities. (2/1/10-6/1/11) Faculty will design and develop student-centered and learner-focused lessons.

Objective 1.2

Method and Activity 1.2.1 Introduction to Content Resources (2/1/10-6/1/10) Faculty will be introduced to grade level and content specific web-based curriculum and online resources with assistance from the integration specialist and technology director.

Method and Activity 1.2.2 Ongoing Curriculum Design (8/15/10-6/1/11) Faculty will receive continuous, embedded professional development to advance applications of web-based curriculum and online resources with assistance from the curriculum director, integration specialist, and technology director.

Objective 1.3

Method and Activity 1.3.1 Communication Through Website (2/1/10-6/1/11) Faculty will receive ongoing embedded professional development focusing on district web-based resources to keep community informed of district events, instructional tools and resources.

Method and Activity 1.3.2 Communication Through Student Management Systems (2/1/10- 6/1/11) Faculty will receive ongoing embedded professional development focusing on using district student information systems to keep parents informed.

Goal #2 Objective 2.1

Method and Activity 2.1.1 Purchase Smart Boards, Student Response Systems and Polycom units (2/1/10-4/1/10) Technology Director and Continuity Advisory Team will select hardware and software.

Method and Activity 2.1.2 Functionality and Readiness (4/1/10-8/15/10) Technology Director and Building and Grounds Director will confirm the functionality and readiness of technologies purchased.

Objective 2.2

Method and Activity 2.2.1 Design and Develop Differentiated Lessons (2/1/10-6/1/11) Faculty will design differentiated lessons that increase student engagement.

Method and Activity 2.2.2 Implement Faculty Use of Media Rich Technology (4/1/10-6/1/11) Faculty will practice effective strategies.

Objective 2.3

Method and Activity 2.3.1 Implement Classroom Use of Media Rich Technology (8/15/10-6/1/11) Faculty will provide engaging student centered learning environment for maximum achievement.

Objective 2.4

Method and Activity 2.4.1 Implement District Web-Based Designed Curricula (8/15/10-6/1/11) Faculty will receive ongoing instructional training with the addition of new educational lessons and strategies to communicate district goals, strategies and assessment systems.

Goal #3 Objective 3.1

Methods and Activities 3.1.1 Develop and Introduce (2/1/10-2/15/10) Design alternative instructional models that complement technology integration.

Methods and Activities 3.1.2 Involve District Integration Specialist in Technology Training

(2/1/10-2/15/10) District team members will be trained.

Objective 3.2

Methods and Activities 3.2.1 Plan and Host

(4/1/10-6/1/11) Technology Integration Specialist will plan and host professional development.

Goal #4 Objective 4.1

Methods and Activities 4.1.1 Internal/External Review (6/1/10-6/1/11) Internally/External evaluate project development and progress.

Objective 4.2

Methods and Activities 4.2.1 Plan and Host (6/1/10-6/1/11) Plan and host on-site visitations and web-supported information for interested school districts.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Project Continuity¿s professional development will proceed in four (4) phases and be organized by the project¿s methods and activities. It has been organized to provide high-quality, ongoing/sustained professional development for faculty, principals, administrators, and/or school library media personnel serving the partnership. The collaborative capacity of the partnership will be increased and synchronized.

Phase One Professional Development for Methods and Activities:

Planning, Selection and Purchasing

2.1.1 Review and Purchase (2/1/10-4/1/10) Technology Director and Continuity Advisory Team will review and select hardware and software.

3.1.2 Involve District Integration Specialist in Technology Training (2/1/10-2/15/10) District team members will be trained.

Phase Two Professional Development for Methods and Activities: Orientation to Running Equipment

1.2.1 Introduction to Content Resources (2/1/10-6/1/10) Faculty will be introduced to grade level and content specific web-based curriculum and online resources with assistance from the integration specialist and technology director.

2.1.2 Functionality and Readiness (4/1/10-8/15/10) Technology Director and Building and Grounds Director will confirm the functionality and readiness of technologies purchased.

Phase Three Professional Development for Methods and Activities:

Embedded Activities Around Implementation of Curriculum Design

1.1.1 Introduction of Alternative Instructional Models

(2/1/10-6/1/10) Faculty will be introduced to alternative technology models of lesson and strategy design proven to increase student achievement.

3.1.1 Develop and Iintroduce (2/1/10-2/15/10) Design alternative instructional models that complement technology integration.

1.2.1 Introduction to Content Resources (2/1/10-6/1/10) Faculty will be introduced to grade level and content specific web-based curriculum and online resources with assistance from the integration specialist and technology director.

1.1.2 Development of Prototype Student-Centered Lessons (2/1/10-6/1/11) Faculty will design and develop student-centered and learner-focused lessons.

3.2.1 Plan and Host (4/1/10-6/1/11) Technology Integration Specialist will plan and host professional development.

1.3.1 Communication Through Website (2/1/10-6/1/11) Faculty will receive ongoing embedded professional development focusing on district web-based resources to keep community informed of district events, instructional tools and resources.

1.3.2 Communication Through Student Management System (2/1/10-6/1/11) Faculty will receive ongoing embedded professional development focusing on district student information systems to keep parents informed.

1.2.2 Ongoing Curriculum Design Support

(8/15/10-6/1/11) Faculty will receive continuous, embedded professional development scheduled and organized to advance applications of web-based curriculum and online resources with assistance from the curriculum director, integration specialist, and technology director.

2.2.1 Design and Facilitate Differentiated Lessons

(2/1/10-6/1/11) Faculty will design differentiated lessons that increase student engagement.

2.2.2 Implement Faculty Use of Media Rich Technology (4/1/10-6/1/11) Faculty will practice effective strategies.

4.2.1 Plan and Host (6/1/10-6/1/11) Plan and host on-site visitations and web-supported information for interested school districts.

Phase Four Professional Development for Methods and Activities: Assessment

4.1.1 Internal/External Review (6/1/10-6/1/11) Internally/externally evaluate project development and progress.

FORMATIVE/SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Project Continuity will demonstrate progress toward project goals and objectives through local level monitoring. Formative and summative evaluations will be done by the project¿s leadership team within project phases and chronological methods and activities. The overall objective of the evaluation plan is to increase the ability of faculty and students to meet challenging academic standards through the effective integration of technology into the curricula.

Phase One Evaluation Criteria: Planning, Selection and Purchasing:

Successful selection and training of Project Continuity Leadership Team on identified technologies. (2/1/2010 to 2/15/2010)

Phase Two Evaluation Criteria: Orientation to Equipment Operation:

Confirmation will be made by the partnership Technology Director and Building and Grounds Director on the readiness of the selected technologies for professional development phase. (4/1/2010 to 8/15/2010)

Phase Three Evaluation Criteria: Embedded Activities Targeting the Implementation of Curriculum Design

Evaluation will be conducted to assess the introduction of alternative instructional models to faculty and continuous support of faculty for content resource identification and technology integration. Prototype, student-centered lessons will be evaluated for the frequency and quality of faculty collaboration. (8/15/2010 to 6/1/2011)

Phase Four Evaluation Criteria: Assessment

An internal evaluation will be conducted at each phase of the project to determine readiness for the next phase. An external team of professional educators will be invited to assess the Project Continuity. (6/1/2010 to 6/1/2011)

LOCAL MATCH

$84,625

In addition to expenditures from the Capital Projects Fund and General Fund, Wabash City Schools has been able to secure funds for Smart Board technology through the following grants: Community Foundation of Wabash County, Sundheimer Grant, Guynn Grant, Title 1 Grant, and High Ability Grant. With these funds and grants, Wabash City Schools has received the money to purchase 16 Smart Boards for classrooms at a cost of approximately $48,000. Wabash City Schools is currently using corporation funds to pay the salary of a newly created position of Technology Software Integration Specialist. The Technology Software Integration Specialist provides on-site, embedded training to faculty so they can engage students with classroom technology through multi-media lesson plans and further their academic achievement. In addition to paying the salary of the Specialist, Wabash City Schools is paying for her to attend the Smart Board training in January 2010, thus providing Wabash City Schools with a certified Smart Board trainer. As the need grows for more training, another technology person will sent for the Smart Board training.

PARTNERSHIPS

A collaborative partnership structure currently exists between Wabash City Schools, MSD of Wabash County, and Manchester Community Schools. This partnership has existed since the awarding of the CAPE grant from the Lilly Foundation in 2000. Currently, faculty from the three corporations gather together to map out curricular ideas per grade level for the elementary grades or by department for the secondary level. This funding will extend the partnership¿s capacity to collaborate and share technology supported lesson plans and student-focused instructional activities characterized by Smart Board and Student Response System technologies.

The Directors of Curriculum and Instruction for each school corporation will continue to coordinate the collaboration days and the logistics supporting the days (i.e. topics for the day, location of the workshop, and subs). The Directors will also target and prioritize appropriate Smart Board and Student Response System technology topics. These administrators will also verify that faculty are following through with commitments to integrate targeted technologies and receive ongoing, embedded support.

Since all three school corporations are within the boundaries of Wabash County, there are many opportunities to share among the corporations. The awarding of this grant will allow this curricular process to expand to the sharing of successful methods for the full integration of classroom-based, student-focused technologies. The technology grant will allow the purchase of Smart Boards and Student Response Systems for the other two school corporations.